

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8093

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: PREDICTIONS OF ONLY MODERATE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT  
ELECTORAL LOSSES PERSIST

SUMMARY: SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY OUR CONSULATES THROUGHOUT ITALY CONFIRM A PERSISTING CONSENSUS AMONG ITALIAN OBSERVERS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) WILL HOLD THEIR REGIONAL ELECTORAL LOSSES WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS IN THE FACE OF NOTABLE SOCIALIST (PSI) GAINS. THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) ARE EXPECTED TO INCREASE THEIR VOTE SLIGHTLY. MEANWHILE, THE FREE-SWINGING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PSI HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON A GREATLY INCREASED NUMBER OF PSI-PCI ELECTORAL ALLIANCES ON THE LOCAL LEVEL, IN SPITE OF PSI PARTY SECRETARY DEMARTINO'S STATED POLICY TO FAVOR THE CENTER-LEFT FORMULA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THOUGH SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED, THE PCI'S GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN AGAINST DC "BAD GOVERNMENT" CONTINUES. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING PAST WEEK CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) - SOCIALIST (PSI) POLEMICS CONTINUED TO CROWD MOST OTHER CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENTS OFFSTAGE. THE DC'S INITIAL CAMPAIGN APPEAL TO VOTERS WAS TO LIMIT SUPPORT TO THOSE PARTIES WITH WHICH IT HAS BEEN ALLIED THE PAST 25 YEARS, INCLUDING RIGHT-OF-CENTER LIBERAL PARTY (PLI). THIS STIMULATED SOCIALIST CHARGES THAT FANFANI WAS PREPARING RETURN TO CENTRPST NATIONAL FORMULA.

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2. A FORTISSIMO PASSAGE IN DEBATE WAS THEN OPENED ON MAY

29 BY FANFANI'S EXCLUSION OF THE SOCIALISTS FROM HIS LIST OF PARTIES ELECTORATE SHOULD SUPPORT BECAUSE, HE SAID, THE PSI WAS RIVALING THE COMMUNISTS IN ATTACKING THE DC. HE ALSO CHARGED THAT THE PSI WAS PREPARING TO ALLY ITSELF WITH THE PCI WHEREVER POSSIBLE ON THE LOCAL LEVEL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. PSI PARTY SECRETARY DEMARTINO'S REBUTTAL OF FANFANI'S CHARGES WAS UNDERMINED BY PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER'S PUBLIC ADMISSION THAT PCI AND PSI WERE RUNNING MORE JOINT LISTS THIS ELECTION THAN EVER BEFORE.

3. INTENSIFIED DC-PSI CONFRONTATION OPENLY ALARMED SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) AND, ESPECIALLY, THE REPUBLICANS (PRI) WHO FEAR THAT BITTERNESS OF CAMPAIGN COULD SEVERELY DAMAGE POST-ELECTORAL PROSPECTS FOR THE CENTER-LEFT FORMULA. SIMILAR CONCERN AMONG MANY IN DC AND DEMARTINO SOCIALISTS, AND PRI'S SHARP PUBLIC EXCLUSION OF ANY SUPPORT FOR A CENTRIST TURN, LED TO SOMEWHAT PLACATING STATEMENTS BY BOTH DEMARTINO AND FANFANI. HOWEVER, TONED DOWN BUT SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR CHARGES CONTINUE TO BE MADE ON BOTH SIDES.

4. THE PCU TO DATE HAS CONDUCTED A VIGOROUS AND WELL-ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN IN VIRTUALLY ALL REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. ITS CAMPAIGN IS CENTERED ON THE CHARGE THAT THE DC: AFTER ALMOST 30 YEARS OF POWER: HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE THE COUNTRY WITH EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT ON ANY LEVEL. WHILE THE PCP AIMS GENERALIZED ATTACKS AT THE DC, IT SAVES ITS DIRECT SALVOS FOR DC SECRETARY FANFANI, CRITICIZING HIM PARTICULARLY FOR HIS INTRODUCTION OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST FACTOR INTO THE CAMPAIGN. SECONDARILY THE PCI HAS SEIZED UPON THE ECONOMIC ISSUE, ENTERING INTO POLEMICS WITH DC TREASURY MINISTER COLOMBO AND BANK OF ITALY GOVERNOR CARLI, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE ITALIAN ECONOMY IS SHOWING SIGNS OF RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS OF LAST YEAR.

5. THE PCI HAS NOT PRESSED THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE (DC AGREEMENT TO SHARE GOVERNMENT POWER WITH PCQ) AS AN ISSUE IN THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT CONSIDERS THE COMMUNIST VERSUS ANTI-COMMUNIST ISSUE UNPRODUCTIVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, DC EXPLOITATION OF PORTUGUESE EVENTS HAVE CONTINUED TO TROUBLE THE PCI WHICH HAS BEEN OBLIGED, FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL

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CAL PURPOSES, TO PUT ADDITIONAL DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY. AT THIS STAGE WE UNDERSTAND THE PCI LEADERSHIP IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PARTY'S PROSPECTS IN THE ELECTIONS.

6. PCI CAMPAIGN GIVEN, PERHAPS UNWITTINGLY, HELPING HAND BY CRITICAL SERIES OF ARTICLES ON LOCAL MALADMINISTRATION IN ECONOMIC DAILY I SOLE-VENTIGUATTRO ORE; PAPER NORMALLY REPRESENTS

VIEWS OF ITALIAN MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION, CONFINDUSTRIA, AND ARTICLES WIDELY INTERPRETED

AS WARNING TO POLITICIANS BY CONFINDUSTRIA PRESIDENT AGNELLI. THOUGH NO PARTY FORMALLY CRITICIZED, DC IS MOST VULNERABLE, AND DC ADMINISTRATIONS OF TARANTO AND PALERMO SPECIFICALLY HAVE BEEN ATTACKED.

7. SURVEYS MADE BY ALL CONSTITUENT POSTS AS MONTH CLOSED CONFIRM A WIDE CONSENSUS AMONG OBSERVERS THAT DC LOSSES WILL BE LIMITED TO ABOUT 2-3 PERCENT, WITH GAINS FROM THE RIGHT PARTLY COMPENSATING LOSSES TO THE LEFT. REPORTS FROM THE SOUTH TEND TO CONFIRM THAT PSI, WITH ABOUT A 3 PERCENT NATIONAL INCREASE, WILL BE BIGGEST GAINER AMONG ALL PARTIES. PCI GENERALLY NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE MORE THAN MODEST GAINS IN MOST AREAS. BIG LOSERS SLATED TO BE FAR RIGHT ITALIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT (MSI) AND LIBERALS. REPUBLICANS HELD LIKELY TO GAIN ABOUT 1 PERCENT AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO HOLD OR GAIN SLIGHTLY.

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ALL THE CENTER-LEFT PARTIES REMAIN FIRMLY COMMITTED TO SOME FORM OF THEIR MAJORITY FORMULA ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, RECENT DC-PSI POLEMICS HIGHLIGHT A POLARIZING TREND BETWEEN THE ENTIRE LEFT AND THE CONCERN ON THE LOCAL LEVEL WHICH PREJUDICES CENTER-LEFT FUTURE. ON THE LOCAL LEVEL, STRONG TENDENCIES TO FORM PCI-PSI GOVERNMENTS, WHERE POSSIBLE, EXIST AMONG THE PSI'S BASE, EVEN AMONG MANY SUPPORTERS OF DEMARTINO. EVENTS HAVE SHOWN THAT THE EMARINO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CANNOT FULLY CONTAIN THEM. MOREOVER, WHILE THE PCI IS FOR THE MOMENT AVOIDING DISCUSSION OF ITS PREFERENCE FOR THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, IT IS MAKING ITS WILLINGNESS KNOWN TO FORM LEFTIST FRONTS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL. IT NOW LOOKS AS THOUGH WE CAN EXPECT MORE OF BOTH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFTER THE ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY THE FRONTIST ALTERNATIVE.

9. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, BUDGET MINISTER  
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ANDREOTTI AGREED WITH ABOVE ESTIMATES. ANDREOTTI PREDICTED THAT POLITICAL EFFECT OF MODERATE PSI GAINS COUPLED WITH CONTAINED DC LOSSES WOULD BE SOCIALIST PUSH FOR AT LEAST ONE MORE KEY MINISTRY (E.G., FOREIGN AFFAIRS OR DEFENSE) IN ADDITION TO LARGER SHARE OF POWER AND PATRONAGE PIE IN RETURN FOR RECONSTITUTION OF CENTER-LEFT. VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

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